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FBIS-4015-88
5 October 1988

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director, Foreign Broadcast Information Service
THROUGH: Chief, Operations Group
SUBJECT: Monthly Report--Jordan Bureau--September 1988

I. GENERAL

Continuing its downward trend, the Jordanian dinar has now officially declined some 12 percent against the dollar and further against several other currencies. In addition Amman money changers now offer an extra 10 percent for cash and slightly less for personal checks. In the West Bank, cited as a harbinger of events in the East, the dinar is quoted in the .460 to .480 range, versus the official rate of .375, and some forecasters are predicting that the rate in Amman will shortly reach the .500 level. These exchange rates bode well in the short run for the bureau budget but also may indicate future stresses in the Jordanian political arena. *

II. OPERATIONS

A. Monitorial/Editorial

1. The bureau suffered several power outages of an hour or longer in the first two weeks of September caused by problems at the Embassy (in one instance, blown fuses). Disruption to coverage was minimal, and the problems now seem to have been resolved.

2. On the first of the month the Amman weekly JERUSALEM STAR, only 6 years old, ceased publication on the orders of a newly appointed management committee of the Jordan Press and Publishing Company, publisher of AL-DUSTUR.

B. Lateral Services

1. With AG's concurrence, the bureau proposed dropping the processing of "special messages" broadcast by Baghdad Voice of the PLO. The BBC responded that their "official consumers value highly 'special messages'...and would thus like to see continued filing."

2. Upon the request of AID Director Lewis Reade for information on this "international incident," the bureau supplied him with a copy of an item filed by Tel Aviv Bureau on a flow of sewage from Jordan into Eilat in Israel.

3. FAA Representative Donald Jones has again expressed thanks for receiving FBIS items on aviation matters, saying they provide "very good material" for office cables.

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III. ADMINISTRATION

A. Personnel

1. Communications operator [] resigned effective 10 September. STAT
2. Senior monitor/shift supervisor [] resigned effective 24 September in order to look into job opportunities in Bahrain, possibly in the Information Ministry there. STAT
3. [] entered on duty as an FBN-5/1 communications operator on 11 September. STAT
4. Approval has been granted for [] to enter on duty as an FBN-7/1 Arabic monitor trainee in October. STAT
5. Electronics Engineer [] married [] 7 September and departed Amman 8 September for a honeymoon in Istanbul and the Sea of Marmora. STAT
STAT

B. Buildings and Grounds

The Embassy severely pruned the trees lining the back wall of the compound during the month and in the process cut the bureau's long wire. It will be several days more before it can be replaced.

IV. VISITS

1. Deputy Chief/Operations Group [] visited Amman from 27 September until 1 October. STAT
2. A visiting headquarters senior analyst on TDY in the Middle East visited the bureau on 18 September to discuss media coverage of Islamic fundamentalism with several bureau monitors headed by Chief Monitor []. STAT
3. New Embassy CPO Carl Obiden paid a familiarization visit to the bureau on 11 September.
4. Bureau Chief [] was on A/L and TDY for the bureau chiefs' conference from 8 to 25 September. STAT
5. Senior Editor [] almost found himself stranded on the West Bank while serving as a nonprofessional courier to the Consulate in Jerusalem on the 23 September weekend. Tel Aviv Bureau assisted in notifying him that the JORDAN TIMES reported that the King Husayn (Allenby) bridge was to be closed prior to his intended crossing time and to remain closed for nearly two days. He made it to the bridge with a margin of 15 minutes. STAT

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V. COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

1. Deputy Chief [] spoke at a "mission briefing" on 13 September. Part of the Embassy's orientation program, the purpose of the briefing was to inform newcomers and others about the structure and purpose of the post.

STAT

2. [] wife of Senior Editor [] has been chosen by the Dependent Hiring Committee to serve as part of a team of two as the Embassy's new Community Liaison Officers.

STAT

3. [] was the guest of honor at a reception given by the bureau chief 29 September. It was attended by the DCM, the military attache, AID's director and numerous other luminaries of the Amman social scene.

STAT

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Chief, Amman Bureau